

REMARKS

Claims 35-37 and 39-52 were previously pending in the application. Claims 35, 37, 39, 46, 50, and 51 have been amended. No claims have been added or cancelled. Claims 35-37 and 39-52 therefore remain pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Applicant submits herewith replacement drawing sheets 1-6 including Figs. 1-11. The replacement drawing sheets identifies Fig. 2A and Fig. 2B. The specification has been amended in a manner consistent with the changes to the drawings.

Claim 46 has been amended to include a comma after the word “respectively” in line 7, thereby overcoming the objection to claim 46 set forth in the Office action.

Claims 35-37 and 39-52 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as being indefinite.

In claim 35, line three, “the surgical instrument” is said to lack antecedent basis. Applicant has amended the claim term “surgical instrument” and “surgical component” to recite the claim term “surgical auxiliary member” throughout the claims, as described in the pending specification (see, e.g., Paragraphs 9-13). These claim amendments are made for reasons related to form, and not patentability, nor are these claim amendments intended to narrow the scope of the claims in any way.

In claim 46, line 5, the Office Action asserts that the holes are not collectively “configured to receive a (single) surgical component” as recited. Claim 46 has been amended to clarify that the holes are each configured to receive a surgical auxiliary material. This amendment is not intended to limit the scope of claim 46 to holes of capable of receiving only one surgical auxiliary material. To this end, Applicant notes that claim 46 recites a sterilization carrier system comprising ... at least first and second carriers, wherein each of the first and second carriers includes a storage area that defines a hole extending therethrough (underline added for emphasis).

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 35-37 and 39-52 is respectfully requested.

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Applicant asserts that each claim amendment has been made for the purposes of form, and to remove issues for appeal. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the present amendment be entered and considered.

Applicant further respectfully asserts that each objection and rejection to the claims has been overcome, and a notice of allowance is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is hereby authorized to contact the undersigned at the telephone number appearing below if such would advance the prosecution of this application.

No fees are believed to be due for the filing of this correspondence. However, if any fees are deemed due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to withdraw such fees from Deposit Account No. 23-3050.

Respectfully submitted,

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